

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN – 2007 through 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. Teenagers often leave their homes because of domestic violence. The absence of a safe place to go may jeopardize the safety and very life of someone experiencing domestic violence. The dynamics of domestic violence and the impact of abuse may result in a pattern of homelessness that can potentially last for years. An inadequate supply of affordable housing and the lack of living wage jobs can perpetuate homelessness far too long. Those who are homeless due to domestic violence—singles, families, and youth—are an important part of the Ten-Year Plan To End Homelessness.

Collaboration with Interagency Council of the King County Committee to End Homelessness

The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention (DVSAP) Division of the City of Seattle Human Services Department (HSD) presents this strategic plan, specific to the needs of victims of domestic violence, as an accompaniment to the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Division staff will work with community partners and the work groups of the Interagency Council (IAC) of the King County Committee to End Homelessness (KCCEH) to implement this plan in order to address the unique housing needs of domestic violence victims.

Victims of domestic violence also have many issues that overlap with those faced by the general homeless population: physical and mental health issues, substance abuse problems, and poverty. Many victims of domestic violence are refugees or immigrants with limited English skills and a fear of being deported if they seek help. An extremely disproportionate number of homeless domestic violence victims are women and children of color, which serves as a constant reminder of the sexism, racism and discrimination that exist in education, employment, and housing. Therefore, it is vital that domestic violence service providers work with the community as a whole to end homelessness so that all of the barriers to access and stability in housing may be eliminated.

Strategic Plan Components

This four-year strategic plan, which will be updated during 2010, has three primary components. The first is the prevention of homelessness, which, for victims of domestic violence, includes personal safety and batterer accountability along with financial assistance to maintain the household. The second component is a safe place to go for a temporary period when safety at home is impossible. Finally, there needs to be an adequate stock of affordable housing options with financial assistance and services as needed so that stability for the individual/family may be secured. Stability in housing can

mean the difference in successfully pursuing goals related to complex legal cases, education, employment, and healing for women and their children.

Recommendations

The recommendations under each strategic plan component are listed below. The body of the plan includes action steps and timelines for completion. The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention (DVSAP) staff will be relying heavily on the support of key collaborators, community providers, and funders for implementation and completion of the plan's recommendations.

Prevention of Homelessness

Recommendation #1: Coordinate with the prevention efforts of current funders (both City of Seattle and Washington State) to create a funding pool that will temporarily help maintain women in their homes (e.g., rental assistance, utility assistance, mortgage support, critical repairs, and maintenance) while income options are explored and secured.

Recommendation #2: Increase the funding for civil legal assistance, legal advocacy and community advocacy, so that victim/survivors, whether they go to shelter or not, have adequate access to safety strategies, resource information, legal options, and advocacy.

Recommendation #3: Develop and improve strategies, both through policy changes and through funding, to ensure the safety of women and children in their home.

Recommendation #4: Educate domestic violence survivors who live in subsidized housing about their rights under federal and state law to remain in their housing unit or be moved to a safer unit.

Recommendation #5: Work with domestic violence specialized providers to develop educational programs on domestic violence for culturally specific communities so that women and children may be safe in their own homes and so that abusive partners understand and comply with domestic violence laws.

Interim Housing (Safe Temporary Housing)

Recommendation #6: Work with private and public funders to ensure that by 2014 at least 211 units of interim housing are available county-wide for victims of domestic violence, and that a geographic balance of units is obtained/maintained, consistent with IAC recommendations. Also ensure that there is an adequate number of units that are available to victims of domestic violence with disabilities.

Recommendation #7: Ensure that immigrants, refugees, and those with limited English speaking abilities have access to interim housing and that the housing meets their cultural needs. Work with the IAC to collaborate on any parallel endeavors.

Recommendation #8: Ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic violence have access to safe interim housing.

Recommendation #9: Establish one access point, with interpretative services, for resource information and access to interim housing for domestic violence victims.

Recommendation #10: Develop a recommended model for hotel voucher programs.

Permanent Housing

Recommendation #11: Develop guidelines for supportive services to survivors of domestic violence who are tenants in permanent, supportive housing operated by mainstream homeless/housing providers.

Recommendation #12: Ensure that domestic violence expertise is available throughout the homeless/housing system.

Recommendation #13: Work with the IAC Coordinated Entry Project on the development of a coordinated entry system into permanent housing which is able to appropriately work with DV survivors.

Recommendation #14: Participate in the IAC Landlord/Service Provider Partnership Project and pursue other strategies to enable DV survivors to access and retain private market housing.

Recommendation #15: In conjunction with the Ten Year Plan efforts, address the racism and discrimination that prevent people of color from gaining access to and achieving stability in permanent housing.

The planning process will include a wide variety of community stakeholders. Completed plans will be reviewed and discussed by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council as well as by domestic violence service providers throughout King County.

The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Division is grateful to those who contributed to this plan:

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INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence and Homelessness

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children nationally. A frequently quoted research study found that 92% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.¹ Another study said that 63% of homeless women have been victims of domestic violence as adults.² A 2003 study reported that 38% of victims of domestic violence became homeless after separating from their abuser. An additional 25% indicated that they had to leave their homes during the year after the separation for both safety and financial reasons.³

A recent Group Health study (“Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence, Types, and Chronicity in Adult Women”) revealed that 7.9% of women surveyed said that they had experienced some kind of partner abuse within the past year. Four percent of women surveyed had experienced physical violence from a partner within the past year.⁴ This particular study was conducted on a random sampling of women throughout Washington who had been insured by Group Health at least three years. If these percentages are applied to the King County population of women, based on census projections for 2005, **70,988 women in King County would have experienced some sort of partner abuse within the last year and 35,943 women in King County would have experienced physical violence from a partner within the last year. Assuming an average of 1.6 children per family, approximately 50,000 children could also be impacted.**

There are three dynamics that make domestic violence survivors who are facing homelessness unique:

1. **Safety.** The threat of physical harm greatly increases when a battered woman decides to end the relationship. National research in Canada found that 39% of victims of domestic violence reported that the first incident of domestic violence occurred after separation.⁵ This threat and the accompanying fear may follow a survivor of domestic violence for years after a relationship has ended. Confidential housing options are often the only way to ensure immediate safety.
2. **“The existence of a batterer who is sabotaging a victim’s life goals.”** (Anne Menard) In addition to the threat of physical harm, the batterer often actively works against any step toward independence the survivor may try to take. Jaffe,

¹ Browne, A. & Bassuk, S., “Intimate Violence in the Lives of Homeless and Poor Housed Women: Prevalence and Patterns in an Ethnically Diverse Sample,” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 67(2): April 1997, 261-278; Browne, A., “Responding to the Needs of Low Income and Homeless Women Who Are Survivors of Family Violence” *Journal of American Medical Association*, 53(2): Spring 1998, 57-64.

² U.S. Conference of Mayors, *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America’s Cities: A 25-City Survey*, December 2003.

³ Baker, C., Cook, S. & Norris, F., “Domestic Violence and Housing Problems,” *Violence Against Women*, 9 (7): July 2003, 754-783.

⁴ Thompson, R., Bonomi, A., Anderson, M., Reid, R., Dimer, J., Carrell, D., and Rivara, F., “Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence, Types, and Chronicity in Adult Women,” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 30(6): 2006, 447-457.

⁵ Jaffe, P.C., Lemon, N., & Poisson, S., Child Custody & Domestic Violence. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 29.

Lemon, and Poisson cite a 1995 Joan Zorza publication suggesting that batterers are over-represented in highly litigious custody cases and that the motive is to prolong their control over, intimidation of, and involvement with their ex-partners.⁶

3. **Impacts of abuse.** Depending upon the length of time victimized and the level of violence experienced, a victim of domestic violence may exhibit debilitating symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and/or may turn to prescription medications, alcohol, or illegal drugs to cope. The dynamics of the abuse are often unpredictable and changing, which further contributes to mental health and substance abuse problems. Both mental health issues and drug/alcohol use/abuse are frequently used against a victim of domestic violence to further sabotage her efforts to maintain custody of her children and to remain stable in housing. The impacts of domestic violence on children are another barrier as the behaviors that children often exhibit may be an obstacle to maintaining both custody and housing.

The presence of physical disabilities for some women and the threat of deportation for other women are additional dynamics that are manipulated by an abuser and are often used against victims in the legal system and to sabotage economic independence. National research also reveals that 75% of women who are incarcerated have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate adult partner.⁷

Current Housing Stock for Domestic Violence Victims

The 2006 Inventory of Homeless Units and Beds, prepared by the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness and the King County Housing and Community Development Homeless Housing Program, indicates that there are 1,938 units/2,513 beds of facility-based emergency shelter and 2,197 units/4,124 beds of transitional housing in Seattle/King County.

- **Roughly 66 (3%) of the emergency shelter units or as many as 158 beds, depending upon the numbers within a family, are specifically for victims of domestic violence, both singles and with children. Four more units of emergency shelter are anticipated to come on line in 2007, for a total of 70 units. Of these units, 42 are considered confidential.**
- **113 units (5%) of transitional housing units are identified for victims of domestic violence, both singles and with children. In 2007, it is expected that another 28 units of transitional housing will be created for domestic violence survivors, for a total of 141 units of transitional housing.**
- **By the end of 2007, a total of 211 units of emergency and transitional housing will be available to victims of domestic violence. All emergency and transitional housing units are usually at capacity with many requests for shelter turned away.**

⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

⁷ Browne, A., Miller, B., & Maguin, E., "Prevalence and severity of lifetime physical and sexual victimization among incarcerated women," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, May-August 1999.

Shelter/Interim Housing Units for DV Victims	2006	2007
Confidential units for families	27	31
Semi-Confidential* units for families	12	12
Confidential/Semi-Confidential units for singles	27	27
SUBTOTAL	66	70
Transitional Housing for families and singles	113	141
SUBTOTAL	113	141
TOTAL	179	211

*Semi-Confidential—location is generally known though not publicized.

The options for housing for victims of domestic violence, while limited in capacity, are rich in variety. Seattle is home to the only emergency/transitional housing facility for deaf and hard-of-hearing women in the country. There are confidential emergency and transitional housing units for immigrants with limited English skills. Many of these units receive generous support from the Seattle Housing Authority. East King County is home to the first transitional housing program in the nation specifically for chemically-dependent battered women and their children.

The City of Seattle contracts with a local provider to manage a hotel voucher program, which distributes \$73,000/year to area domestic violence advocacy and shelter programs for emergency shelter for Seattle residents. Several domestic violence agencies throughout the county also have hotel voucher money from other sources.

Several domestic violence agencies offer permanent housing options through either a rental assistance program with supportive services or a transition-in-place program. The Seattle Housing Authority, Renton Housing Authority, and the King County Housing Authority provide roughly 140 Section 8 vouchers through domestic violence agencies to help move domestic violence survivors into permanent housing.

The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The evidence-based model for ending homelessness identified in the Ten-Year Plan is “housing first.” Under this model, individuals are moved into permanent housing quickly, with supportive services and housing subsidies provided at the levels needed for housing stability. Prevention efforts are also utilized early on to help those at risk of homelessness to maintain their current housing, if at all possible. Housing first and prevention efforts are greatly improved through coordinated entry systems that can improve the connections between people and the housing and services that are needed.

A critical goal in achieving housing first and ending homelessness is, as 9,500 anticipated units of housing come on line, decreasing the current stock of homeless shelters and transitional housing by up to 90%. The process would gradually shift funding away from the provision of emergency shelter and transitional housing to permanent housing and supportive services. **The Ten-Year Plan also acknowledges that those experiencing domestic violence may require more transitional assistance.** Provisions are made in the *Emergency Housing Task Force Recommendations* for interim housing which may

include 24/7 congregate housing, apartment units, confidential safe houses, and hotel/motel vouchers. Interim housing will be time limited, service-enriched housing and will be distributed throughout the county for four main categories of homeless families who are anticipated to face delays while permanent housing is identified. Victims of domestic violence are one of the populations identified as needing interim housing.

Disproportionality

The Ten-Year Plan acknowledges that people of color are disproportionately represented among homeless persons. This is also true of local domestic violence housing programs. Out of the 1,115 women and children housed through DVSAP-funded programs in 2006, 77% were people of color. Domestic violence is not more prevalent in communities of color; instead people of color are disproportionately lower income and victims with higher incomes often have other options beyond shelters. Immigrants and refugees accounted for 23% of the 1,115 total number of survivors housed. Racism and discrimination adversely affect access to and success in employment and housing for domestic violence victims as well as for the general homeless population.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS

There are three key areas that need focused attention in order to end homelessness for domestic violence survivors and their children:

1. **Prevention of homelessness (allow survivors to remain or return home)**
2. **Interim housing**
3. **Permanent housing with supportive services as desired by survivor**

Prevention of Homelessness

Approximately half of women victimized by domestic violence leave their homes.⁸ The two primary reasons for leaving home are safety and difficulty in securing a living wage job to financially maintain the home. Women are more likely to leave if their partners are not arrested for the violence, if their partners threaten to hurt them, or if their partners have an alcohol or drug problem.⁹

In order for women to stay in the home, a paradigm shift in society's expectations is required. Instead of a woman being expected to leave the violent household, the abusive partner would be expected to go. This plan does not address the community engagement strategies needed for this paradigm shift, but does offer practical ways for the domestic violence victim to remain in her home. Other efforts designed to create a change in community attitudes should work to increase the expectation that the perpetrator of violence would leave the residence and not the victim. It is also important to help ethnic communities with their response to domestic violence so women and children may stay safely in their homes. Many times, women are faced with the choice of leaving an entire

⁸ Baker, C., Cook, S. & Norris, F., "Domestic Violence and Housing Problems," *Violence Against Women*, 9 (7): July 2003, 754-783.

⁹ Baker, C., Cook, S., & Norris, F., "Domestic Violence and Housing Problems," *Violence Against Women*, 9: 7 (July 2003), 754-783.

community when they leave an abusive partner. Making it safer for women and children to stay in their homes would ease the flood through the front door of homelessness. Because of the dynamics of domestic violence and the social and economic risks involved in ending a relationship, a survivor of domestic violence may at some point choose to invite her partner to return to the family home. The presumption that the perpetrator of violence is the one who must go if there were to be a future altercation would provide a certain amount of security.

Recommendation #1: Coordinate with the prevention efforts of current funders (both City of Seattle and Washington State) to create a funding pool that will temporarily help maintain women in their homes (e.g., rental assistance, utility assistance, mortgage support, critical repairs, and maintenance) while income options are explored and secured.

Action steps:

- Identify outcomes for this recommendation, identify and secure funding to achieve the outcomes, develop resource access protocols, conduct an RFI process, and contract with providers to deliver the outcomes. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2008.*

Recommendation #2: Increase the funding for civil legal assistance, legal advocacy and community advocacy, so that victim/survivors, whether they go to shelter or not, have adequate access to safety strategies, resource information, legal options, and advocacy.

Action steps:

- Per a Seattle City Council 2007 budget proviso, develop a plan (including outcomes) to contract for \$135,000 in 2007 and \$270,000 in 2008 for civil legal and/or legal advocacy services for victims of domestic violence. Obtain approval for the plan from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC). Once approved, conduct an RFI process, and contract with providers to deliver the outcomes. *DVSAP will submit the plan to the DVPC on April 18, 2007 for approval; DVSAP will contract for services by July 1, 2007.*
- Identify (and apply for) other funding sources, including federal grants, to provide additional support for civil legal, legal and community advocacy, and immigration assistance. *Timeline: ongoing.*
- Actively engage in the state legislative process to, at a minimum, maintain the current level of state support for legal and community advocacy and for the presence of domestic violence advocates in the DSHS/Workfirst Community Services Offices. Include, in the City's legislative agenda as possible, the need to advocate for increases in these funding sources. *Timeline: prior to and during each legislative session.*

Recommendation #3: Develop and improve strategies, both through policy changes and through funding, to ensure the safety of women and children in their home.

Action Steps:

- Develop and make available to providers a list of experts who can provide technical assistance to make the home secure for domestic violence survivors

through lock changes, additional external security measures for the house, and technology safety. Explore private funding sources to enable providers to hire experts to assist with these measures. ***DVSAP staff to complete by December 31, 2008.***

- Hold batterers accountable through the law enforcement and court systems:
 - Continue work on the Strategic Plan on Seattle's Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence. ***Timeline: ongoing***
 - Submit applications, as opportunities arise, for Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies (GEAP) and other federal and local funding sources that enhance the current criminal justice response to arrest and prosecute batterers. ***DVSAP staff will work with City and County governmental and non profit agencies to develop and submit an application for 2007 GEAP funding by February 7, 2007. DVSAP staff will also be prepared to submit an application for GEAP 2009.***
 - Identify and seek funding, through GEAP and other sources, to provide trainings to prosecutors. ***Timeline: trainings take place during 2008.***
- Engage in a planning process with community partners to expand the capacity for safe child visitations with the abusing parent modeled on the SafeHavens project operated by the City of Kent. ***Timeline: as requested by SafeHavens staff.***
- Develop protocols detailing how batterers released from jail with a no contact order have a place to go, including a motel voucher if necessary, rather than return to the home. ***DVSAP staff to present protocols to the DVPC by October, 2008 for discussion.***
- Support the implementation of the King County Coalition Against Domestic Violence plan to improve and expand the region's civil legal system and family law process for survivors of domestic violence. ***Timeline: ongoing.***

Recommendation #4: Educate domestic violence survivors who live in subsidized housing about their rights under federal and state law to remain in their housing unit or be moved to a safer unit.

Action Steps:

- Work with local housing authorities to review their response to domestic violence and encourage policies similar to those of SHA. ***DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007***
- Work with local housing authorities and with agencies issuing Section 8 vouchers to victims of domestic violence to help them develop materials and methods to inform tenants of their rights, under federal and state law, to remain in their housing unit or be moved to a safer unit. ***DVSAP staff to complete by July, 2008.***
- Advocate for changes (in conjunction with the Committee to End Homelessness-Interagency Council efforts) for subsidized housing that would provide more flexibility in suitability requirements, such as housing history and criminal background, for domestic violence survivors. Positive aspects of the applicant should be reviewed more closely instead of issuing an automatic denial. ***DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.***
- Help develop contractual relationships between public housing authorities and domestic violence agencies so that domestic violence services may be available

for tenants and community education forums on domestic violence may be presented at project-based sites. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2008*

Recommendation #5: Work with domestic violence specialized providers to develop educational programs on domestic violence for culturally specific communities so that women and children may be safe in their own homes and so that abusive partners understand and comply with domestic violence laws.

Action steps:

- Develop a plan with the providers that describes existing community education/engagement efforts and identifies areas where additional funding could improve and expand current work in this area. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.*
- Identify funding sources, develop an RFI, and contract with agencies for additional community education and engagement work. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2009.*
- Expand bi-lingual and bi-cultural responses to domestic violence, and improve access to interpreters through the GEAP-funded Multi-lingual Access Project.

Timeline: ongoing.

Interim Housing

According to the *Emergency Housing Task Force Recommendations of the Committee to End Homelessness*, interim housing is time-limited, service-enriched housing which may include 24/7 staffed congregate housing, confidential safe houses, apartment units, and hotel vouchers, as available and appropriate. According to the Task Force Recommendations, these programs will be distributed throughout the county for four main categories of homeless families and individuals who are anticipated to face delays while permanent housing is identified. Victims of domestic violence are one of the populations identified as needing interim housing.

The goals of interim housing are to:

- provide a safe, confidential, supportive and service-enriched option for women and children who must leave their current living situation because of the danger imposed by the batterer,
- allow time for interim housing staff to assist victims as they identify personal goals and carry out plans to achieve these goals, and
- provide a temporary, safe place to live while victims await permanent housing.

During the course of crisis intervention, it may become clear that the domestic violence victim is not safe in her home or does not have a viable housing option at all. At this time, it is critical that there is an adequate supply of temporary housing options for the safety of victims and their children. The domestic violence programs operating emergency shelters turn away many requests for shelter. In 2005, the turn-aways for individual shelter requests averaged about 14 to 1 among the county's confidential domestic violence shelters. Since women make many calls to secure shelter, the estimated turn-aways do not represent an unduplicated count. It is difficult to determine what is needed in order to ensure that no one fleeing domestic violence is turned away.

We do know that on January 27, 2006, 946 individuals who had experienced

violence within the year were in emergency and transitional housing programs. Seventy-five percent were accessing family programs. It is not known how many of those individuals were actively fleeing an abusive partner. With only 179 units of domestic violence-specific emergency and transitional housing, it can be assumed that a sizable number of domestic violence survivors and their children were in homeless shelter and transitional housing programs, as well as in hiding or on the streets.

Recommendation #6: Work with private and public funders to ensure that by 2014 at least 211 units of interim housing are available county-wide for victims of domestic violence, and that a geographic balance of units is obtained/maintained, consistent with recommendations by the IAC. Also ensure that there is an adequate number of units that are available to victims of domestic violence with disabilities.

Action steps:

- Explore and recommend options for replacement interim housing units if some of the transitional housing stock converts to permanent supportive housing.

Timeline: ongoing.

- Participate in discussions with federal funders on housing categories, length of stay expectations, and outcomes to ensure that no services dollars are lost to domestic violence supportive housing programs. ***Timeline: ongoing.***
- Review community-based agency strategies for providing temporary housing for disabled domestic violence victims and modify as need may indicate. ***DVSAP staff to complete by 12/07.***

Recommendation #7: Ensure that immigrants, refugees, and those with limited English speaking abilities have access to interim housing and that the housing meets their cultural needs. Work with the IAC committees to collaborate on any parallel endeavors.

Action steps:

- Conduct an assessment and generate a report with recommendations that detail the interim housing capacity for domestic violence victims who are refugees, immigrants and/or have limited English speaking skills.
 - Review existing domestic violence housing programs to determine their culturally specific policies, types of services, lengths of stay, whether the programs are confidential, semi-confidential, or available to all families, children's services, and outcome expectations.
 - Review promising, best and evidence-based programs and practices for serving these populations and compare these to the current offerings.
 - Develop recommendations to address any deficiencies or changes in practices.
 - Identify new or existing funding to implement plan recommendations.

DVSAP staff to present the assessment findings and recommendations to the DVPC in December, 2009 for discussion.

Recommendation #8: Ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic violence have access to safe interim housing.

Action steps:

- Together with LGBT community, identify housing needs and barriers, and develop recommendations and funding ideas to address both.

DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2008.

Recommendation #9: Establish one access point, with interpretive services, for resource information and access to interim housing for domestic violence victims.

Action steps:

- With funding appropriated in the 2007 DVSAP budget to develop a plan for coordinated access to services, including shelters and crisis lines, conduct focus groups and key informant interviews with domestic violence victims, including immigrants, refugees and those with limited English speaking ability, and other key partners to identify gaps and barriers in the current system.
- Obtain funding and implement the plan.

DVSAP staff to present a funding and implementation plan to the DVPC in December, 2007 for discussion.

Recommendation #10: Develop a recommended model for hotel voucher programs.

Action steps:

- Research current hotel voucher programs countywide; identify the services provided and outcomes measured. ***DVSAP staff to complete by October, 2007***
- Develop a recommended model for program services, delivery and outcomes (including necessary staff support), the best way for clients to access these programs, and if additional funding is needed to ensure that no one is turned away, identify funding sources (s). ***DVSAP staff to complete by July, 2008***
- Obtain additional funding through public or private sources, if needed. ***DVSAP staff to complete by July, 2009.***

Permanent Housing

Permanent housing is defined as non-time-limited housing. The move to another home is the choice of the resident and not determined by a program. The primary goal of most survivors is to establish their own home. Stable housing is vital to the healthy development of children. Lengthy time periods in the emergency shelter and transitional housing systems are often indicative of a lack of affordable housing and of the challenges faced by a woman to make a living wage that can support herself and her children.

Economic stability may be difficult to achieve when there is an abusive partner who is not only using the legal system as a control tactic but is also actively trying to sabotage her efforts to secure and maintain employment. A history of family poverty can also serve to perpetuate the cycles of both homelessness and violence. Post-traumatic stress disorder often impacts victims of domestic violence. An estimated 40% to 84% of those arriving in shelter and community programs exhibit symptoms of PTSD.¹⁰ As many as 50% to 80% of the domestic violence victims in emergency shelters struggle with drug and alcohol abuse. Domestic violence victims who also have a childhood history of

¹⁰ Gelason, W.J., "Mental disorders in battered women: An empirical study," *Violence and Victims*, 8(1): 1993, 53-68.

sexual assault may have even deeper mental health issues and chemical dependency problems. A variety of housing with services options must be tailored to individual needs. Research cited by the Corporation for Supportive Housing shows that difficult-to-serve families often have a history of sexual assault and/or domestic violence.¹¹

Recommendation #11: Develop guidelines for supportive services to survivors of domestic violence victim who are tenants in permanent, supportive housing operated by mainstream homeless/housing providers.

Action steps:

- Develop guidelines with input from domestic violence and homeless/housing service providers for supportive services for domestic violence survivors moving from domestic violence housing/shelter programs into permanent housing programs operated by mainstream homeless/housing providers. Work with Washington Families Fund in its process of developing an intensive service model for high needs families. *DVSAP staff to complete by July, 2008.*
- Ensure, through provider trainings and HSD contracts, that safety and security measures (including address confidentiality program) are integrated into permanent housing placement. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2008*
- Together with homeless/housing service providers, assess the availability of culturally specific supportive services in permanent housing for domestic violence survivors who are immigrants and refugees. Provide recommendations for improving availability, if needed. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2009.*

Recommendation #12: Ensure that domestic violence expertise is available throughout the homeless/housing system.

Action steps:

- Identify funding for regular trainings on the dynamics of domestic violence for homeless/housing service providers. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2009.*
- Contract with community-based agencies to train homeless/housing service providers (e.g., case managers, therapists, chemical dependency counselors) in the dynamics of domestic violence and how these dynamics can impact victim's housing stability. *Timeline: ongoing.*
- Ensure that domestic violence education be included in the work being done by the Families Committee of the IAC to develop a certification for case managers. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.*
- Work with mainstream homeless providers on data collection that does not compromise victim safety. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.*

Recommendation #13: Work with the IAC Coordinated Entry Project on the development of a coordinated entry system into permanent housing which is able to appropriately work with DV survivors.

Action steps:

¹¹ Bassuk, E. & Perloff, J., "Multiply Homeless Families: The Insidious Impact of Violence," *Housing Policy Debate*, 12 (2): 2001, 299-320.

- Encourage DV service provider inclusion and participation in the planning and implementation process of a coordinated entry system into permanent housing. *Timeline: ongoing*
- Participate in the design of common tools to assess household needs and eligibility for services, to improve identification of domestic violence among homeless individuals, and to ensure referral to appropriate services. *Timeline: ongoing*

Recommendation #14: Participate in the IAC Landlord/Service Provider Partnership Project and pursue other strategies to enable DV survivors to access and retain private market housing.

Action steps:

- Encourage DV service provider participation in the planning process for the Landlord/Service Provider Partnership Project, which will develop relationships with and provide incentives to landlords to rent to tenants they might normally screen out, so that DV agencies and DV survivors may access mitigation funds and other centralized resources.. This project is intended to develop relationships with and provide incentives to landlords to rent to tenants they might normally screen out. *Timeline: ongoing*
- Together with domestic violence agencies, develop strategies for outreach and education to landlords that may include information about current fair housing legislation related to victims of domestic violence. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.*
- Work with victims, providers and private market landlords to ensure knowledge and awareness of existing fair housing legal protections. *Seattle Office for Civil Rights will conduct training on an on-going basis.*
- Review current legislation related to victims of domestic violence and discrimination in housing and, if needed, recommend and advocate for policy changes for 2008 Legislative session. *DVSAP staff to complete by December, 2007.*

Recommendation #15: In conjunction with the Ten-Year Plan efforts, address the racism and discrimination that prevent people of color from gaining access to and achieving stability in permanent housing.

Action steps:

- Participate on Interagency Council of the Committee to End Homelessness task forces or work groups that address and seek to resolve the issue of disproportionality. *Timeline: ongoing.*

CONCLUSION

The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness must include efforts to end homelessness for victims of domestic violence and their children. Our community's political will and funding policies can ensure that no woman is turned away from domestic violence services.

Victims of domestic violence and their children pose unique challenges for the housing system because of safety issues for the victim and other family members, perpetrator attempts to sabotage efforts made by the victim to gain independence, and impacts of long-term domestic violence such as post-traumatic stress disorder, mental illness and chemical dependency. Culturally specific domestic violence programs are expected to adequately address additional barriers of language and immigration status. Providing housing options and access to services that meet the needs of domestic violence survivors and their children is the goal of this strategic plan.

Components critical to the success of this strategic plan are prevention (i.e. women and children safe and economically stable in their homes), interim housing (i.e. immediate safety to escape from abuse and longer-term safety if the threat of violence continues), and permanent housing (i.e. subsidized housing while economic stability is regained, with supportive services as needed).

DVSAP staff wishes to work with community stakeholders to ensure that there is “no wrong door” in our community for homeless survivors of domestic violence. Our efforts seek to involve domestic violence service providers in the IAC efforts to implement the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and to raise awareness among homeless/housing service providers and funders of the unique barriers to housing that domestic violence survivors face.

**Continuum of Services
Domestic Violence and Homelessness**

